(b) whether it is a fact that there has been little effort to prevent the looting of this rich archaeological site which has been going on for at least two decades now; and

(c) if so, what steps Government have proposed to take to prevent the brazen looting of the site?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (c) There were reports of illegal digging for antiquities by the villagers at Chandraketugarh and nearby villages. The Calcutta Circle of the Archaeological Survey of India has brought this to the notice of District and State Government administration to prevent such diggings and illegal trade in antiquities.

In order to ensure the security and protection of the ancient sculptures, idols and artifacts, watch and ward staff have been deployed at centrally protected monuments and archaeological sites. The security has been further supplemented by engaging of private security guards and the State police. The Government is also considering the amendment of the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act 1972 to firmly deal with illicit traffic in antiquities.

Cultural development in Uttaranchal

†744. SHRI HARISH RAWAT: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of schemes being implemented for different types of cultural development in Uttaranchal;

(b) whether the State Government of Uttaranchal has proposed any scheme for development of certain traditional cultural and pilgrimage routes; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and the amount released out of the funds sanctioned for different proposals?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) There is not specific scheme for Uttaranchal. Grant-in-aid is being sanctioned under various Schemes of Ministry of Culture for the

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

protection, promotion and development of Culture and heritage. The Archaeological Survery of India looks after conservation and maintenance of 42 monuments in Uttaranchal. Funds to the tune of Rs. 23.72 lakhs were released to various organizations in the last three years (2003-04 to 2005-06) for upkeep of museums in Uttaranchal. Besides a project for construction of Uday Shankar Academy of Dance and Music at Almora is being funded under the Scheme of Financial Assistance to Voluntary Organisations for Development and Maintenance of National Memorials. The Government of India has approved a grant of Rs. 5.00 crores for this project.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) Does not arise.

Picture of Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daula at Victoria Memorial, Kolkata

745. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI: Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the pricture of Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula, which is being exhibited at the Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata is not of a standard of Nawab as it appears to be of inferior quality;

(b) if so, the reaons for not replacing it by a quite standard quality of Nawab Siraj-Ud-Daula;

(c) by when the Central Government propose to consider to replace it by a picture of standard quality of Nawab; and

(d) if so, by when and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF CULTURE (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) The 'picture' of Late Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula, which was earlier displayed in Calcutta Gallery of Victoria Memorial Hall, Kolkata was a photograph of a painting in the collection of Hazarduari Museum, Murshidabad, West Bengal taken nearly 13-14 years back. It has already been replaced with a good photograph of an oil painting of Late Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula in the collection of Victoria Memorial.